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EDITOR'S MISCELLANY



THE REASON WHY

[From the *Woman's Journal* for September 2, 1911.]

I **AM** a woman working for my living. I own property; I pay taxes; I am assessed for this and that. I have a stake in my city, in my state, in the United States, in the communal life of our race. I am a member, for better or for worse, of the human society. I cannot escape if I would. I am a part of the pattern, as integral as any other. I receive from this society and I contribute to it. I have at heart the improvement of my own milieu, and I have the altruist's desire for the improvement of that of my fellow beings.

I have never seen the reason why I, as well as my neighbors, the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker, the chief cook and bottle washer, and my neighbors of to-morrow, the male Sicilian and the Slav, should not have a voice in my community and state as to taxation, as to what ideals of government can be made real and what not, as to the welfare in general of that society of which I am, indubitably, a member. I see no reason, indeed, why I should not have it as well as my neighbor, the lawyer, the editor, the physician and the divine.

It is my conviction that, in the long evolution of the race and of political societies, the time has arrived when there is little sense in any longer bracketting the two words, sex and suffrage. I believe in restricted suffrage, but restriction should be on other grounds than on that of having been born a woman. Intelligence directed toward the general good, an honestly won and held foothold in life, character dedicated to the uplift of all conditions for us all—these are the desiderata. Intelligence, conscience, character, power to assume responsibility and to work the problem are not confined to the male organism. Physiologically differentiated as they are, man and woman are yet essentially the same. They are interdependent branches of one substance, and they begin life with an equal mental inheritance. The man has his mother in him, the woman has her father. Nothing after birth occurs to justify the supposition that woman does not know right from wrong, clean politics from the opposite, truth from fallacy, patriotism from self-seeking or indifference, altruism from egotism, large thought for the future from a supine resting on the past or a ruinous dalliance with the present. Even the stock argument—woman cannot fight—seems to me a little shop-worn, a trifle overworked. Perhaps, like other warriors, she may find a substitute. Perhaps, if she still attends to things at home while

the men go fight, it will come to be considered only a fair division of labor. It may, perhaps, be remembered for her that, when all is said, she bore the soldier. Assuredly the South will not be the land to say that woman cannot take her share of war.

I think upon this subject as, for a long period of years, have thought many men and women, both in England and America—as thought John Stuart Mill, Huxley, Spencer, Mary Wollstonecroft Godwin, Harriet Martineau, George Eliot, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Florence Nightingale, Charles Kingsley, George Meredith, Emerson, Longfellow, Phillips Brooks, and many another who is gone; as think, to-day, the President of the United States, the President of the French Republic, governors and senators, and at least one member of the Supreme Court, and a long list of writers, thinkers, students, heads of colleges, legislators and men of affairs. I am convinced of the eventual benefit—after the inevitable first mistakes, the temporary friction incidental to every adaptation and attendant upon every great reform—of the suffrage for women, and that not only to women themselves, but to the race at large. To-day, if, by reason of his long-continued and more valuable education, man is somewhat further advanced intellectually, woman may, upon her side, claim with justice to be morally the more evolved. Upon the day when the man approaches to her in moral passion, and she to him in his larger intellectual grasp, upon that day there will dawn a brighter promise for the race. In the meantime, the moral passion is of value in government. Nor are political issues so erudite that woman's mind cannot traverse the maze.

The government of the United States is founded upon two statements: Taxation without representation is tyranny.

Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.

There are perhaps twenty-five million women in the United States, something over five million of whom are wage-earning. There are more—far more—wage-earning women in this country to-day than there were men, women and children in the thirteen colonies upon the day when those fundamental statements were penned. Women, because they are women, are taxed without representation. They are governed without consent. They have personal and contractual, but no political rights. Those, in the twentieth century, in the United States of America, who may raise no voice for or against any measure of government are children, aliens, idiots, lunatics, criminals and women. We, the last-named item, desire to be removed from this catalogue, where we should never have been placed.

MARY JOHNSTON.